

PLEASE NOTE: While this handout contains a lot of text and bullet points, rest assured, the workshop you're about to see is chock full of photos and video clips showing examples and case histories. You will be both entertained and educated.

There are additional notes and rules contained in this handout that won't be covered in the workshop, but might be useful for your product development and marketing efforts.



Destination
Development, Inc.

Trek To Success Montana!

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The New Age of Tourism



The New Age of Tourism



Introduction

- Tourism is an economic development activity.
- The goal is to import more cash into your community than you export.
- Tourism is the fastest growing and one of the top three industries in 49 of 50 states and in every Canadian province.
- Tourism diversifies the local economy.
- Tourism creates jobs and business opportunities: entry level and entrepreneurs. It is the number one industry for small businesses.
- Tourism promotes new business development, particularly in well-branded communities.
- The industry boosts community pride.
- Tourism is your front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts. After all, anyone contemplating a new business or a move to your community will first arrive as a visitor.

Tourism travel

- The number one reason for travel is to visit friends and family.

- The number one activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting.
- Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors.
- If you can't get passers-by to stop, you'll have a tough time becoming *the* destination.

The three primary reasons for travel are:

1. Visiting friends and family. If you did nothing, you will have tourism. But when friends and family come to visit, is your dining room table a concierge desk? Do your residents know what you have to offer and where it's located?

2. Business travel. This includes corporate travel, conventions, conferences and meetings, educational travel (colleges, universities), etc. If you did nothing, you will still have tourism from this segment as well. But do your front-line employees do a good job of providing these visitors with things to do in their down time?

3. The leisure traveler. This group spends the most amount of money and travels to you specifically for things that cater to them that they can't get closer to home. Every true "destination community" caters to this group of travelers.

The three phases of tourism are:

1. Getting passers-by to stop. If you can't get them to stop, you can't become a destination community. What do you have that will get people to stop?

2. Becoming the hub for area attractions & activities. Becoming a hub makes you the overnight destination. Overnight visitors spend three times that of day visitors. But during the day, you may have to send them "out" to area attractions.

3. Becoming the destination. This is the best of all worlds. People come, stay with you, and spend all their time in your community - and that's where they spend nearly all of their money. The ultimate goal of any tourism program is to work towards becoming "the destination."



WHY IS THIS THE NEW AGE OF TOURISM?

In the 50s, 60s and 70s families spent the month of April planning their “summer vacation.” If they had the vacation time they would also plan trips around spring breaks or over the holidays. The primary decision about where to go came from print advertising and limited television advertising, but 96% of the time from word of mouth: recommendations of friends or family, or from articles touting great destinations. This was the era of the Great American Road Trip.

Those days are gone. The Information Age has changed everything. We no longer need to rely on word of mouth or advertising - we can easily get all the information we want about new places within minutes. We no longer need to plan months in advance. Instead we make our decisions just a few

days or weeks before we depart. Few of us even have time for full-blown two-week vacations, and so we are taking more frequent brief getaways instead. The word “weekend getaway” didn’t arrive until the mid-80s.

Welcome to the age of instant information and last minute travel. An age where travelers are looking for specialized activities and experiences more than cities, counties or even states. An age where the internet dominates the decision making process. An age where visitors expect to get specific information, not the usual generalities.

But with all of these changes, communities’ tourism goals are still the same: bringing new cash into the community. The idea is to import more than you export. It is the fastest growing industry in all 50 states and in every Canadian province. In the U.S. it’s a \$700 billion industry.

THE GOOD NEWS:

1. 85% of Americans are traveling as much or more in 2007 than in 2006.
2. International travel is projected to increase 5.5% to 52 million travelers.
3. 47% of travelers purposely leave room in their luggage for shopping - the number one diversionary activity of travelers. 17% buy an extra suitcase.
4. Boomers are looking for places to retire. They come first as visitors and if they like the area, they come back - with buying power - in fact, 70% of North America’s wealth.

THE CHALLENGES:

1. Every year another 2,000 communities in the U.S. and Canada decide to make tourism a priority as they diversify from their original industries: fishing, timber, agriculture, manufacturing, mining, etc.
2. The internet has multiplied our travel choices opening up new options and experiences. 94% of internet-enabled people use it to plan their travel. In the past we relied on word of mouth, but now, in just a few minutes, we can find dozens of other choices - new experiences.
3. The average person is exposed to more than 3,000 marketing messages a day - far more than the mind can absorb, so we filter out everything not specifically appealing to us. This has created the “age of specialization.”
4. Competition has never been more fierce for the lucrative travel dollar. This is forcing communities to enter into THE NEW AGE OF TOURISM.





WHO IS SPENDING THE MONEY

Know your audience

- The baby boom generation accounts for 80% of all travel spending. This generation (born between 1946 and 1964) includes 85 million residents.
- There are 350,000 Americans turning 50 - every month. And this trend will continue for another seven years. The oldest boomers turned 60 in 2006.
- Boomers control 70% of North America's wealth.
- They are becoming the "inheritance boom" - the boom generation will inherit \$10.4 trillion from their parents, the greatest transfer of wealth in history. Where are they spending the money? Second homes and travel.
- Boomers want quality and are in their peak earning years. They want things that are truly unique and exciting.
- Currencies embraced: Time, comfort, easy access. The mindset: Emphasis on youth, self absorption (what's in it for me).

- Trend: "Downshifting" - itineraries, entire trips planned, all-inclusive resorts.
- Trend: The peak travel months for empty-nesters are April, May, September, and October. What to do? Extend your seasons. Get out of the "summer vacation" mode. Those days are gone.
- The boomers mantra: "We may be aging, but we are NOT growing old."
- Top boomer travel trends:
 - Culinary tourism and education
 - Artists in action, learning various forms of art
 - Gardening is the fastest growing hobby: education is huge, tours of gardens, arboretums, beautiful homes
 - Open air markets: farm fresh, arts & crafts, entertainment
 - Experiential-based activities, albeit cushy adventure
 - Genealogy is another fast-growing hobby
- Web-enabled boomers use the internet 94% of the time in planning trips.
- 70% of all regional trips are now planned less than three weeks before departure.

TRAVEL AND BABY BOOMERS:

- Travel is a necessity, not a luxury
- Group travel is seen as herding
- No to senior discounts (seniors are now 70+)
- No pigeon holing: Boomers are both grandparents and new parents. Many are retiring while others are starting new careers.
- Retirement begins in 2011 and will continue for nearly 20 years.
- Boomers love "adventuring" - albeit cushy adventure and specific types of adventures. Don't promote generic "adventures."
- Echo Boomers (kids of the baby boom generation, born between 1977 and 1985) are driving places like Las Vegas. They like gathering places, entertainment, excitement, nightlife.
- There are 80 million echo-boomers, nearly as numerous as their folks.
- Hot tourism trends include "culinary adventure," learning experiences, artists in action, event tourism, public markets, cultural experiences.
- Music and entertainment are major draws for echo-boomers.
- Echo boomers want extreme adventure. Rock climbing is the fastest growing sport among this age group. Extreme biking is also popular.



Check out Cyclo-cross.

OTHER TRENDS:

- Today's parents spend more time with their children than their parents did in 1965. Fathers: twice as much time.
- 100 million Americans will join the population over the next 37 years: half will be immigrants or their children.
- Half of all Americans 25 to 29 years old are unmarried.
- Girlfriend vacations a fast growing trend (women vacationing with friends)

The following are a few of the new trends in tourism and ones that are sure to be around for decades, ushering in the New Age of Tourism:

The great American Road Trip is back

- RV sales, leases and rentals are at an all-time high, and growing at nearly 30% annually - even with high fuel prices.
- RV traveler demographics have gone from 67 years old to less than 50 years old and now includes family. "This is not your father's Oldsmobile" now translates to RVs. The fastest growing RV segment: ages 35 to 54.
- RVing is a \$1.4 billion industry in North America
- Exploration and "reconnection" is the primary activity
- More trips, shorter trips, and at a moment's notice
- Genealogy, history, education - finding one's roots is now a big and growing travel segment.
- County fairs, farmers markets, artists in action are growing trends.
- RVers are staying longer in one place.

WHAT TO DO

- Have upscale, attractive RV parks in the area.
- Recruit RV park developers as part of your product development efforts.
- Include "Trip Planners" on your website complete with maps, distances (miles and kilometers), and make it easy to use, and easy to see and available in print formats. Do this for RVers, motorcyclists, bicyclists, car clubs, and other niche groups.
- Get involved with travel guide publications and books: Good Sam, Woodalls, AAA Tour Books.

- Offer RV parking downtown.

Cheaper is Chicer

- No one wants to overpay in an era of "downward nobility."
- 50 million people visit the top 10 websites every month to find special deals.
- People still want, and will pay more, for quality, but they want it at rock-bottom prices. The internet has made all pricing transparent.

WHAT TO DO

- Make sure you include "special deals" on your website. Begin a "permission marketing" program with periodic e-mail newsletters. Promote real prices, not percentage discounts.
- Make booking special deals and packages easy.
- Don't place all kinds of restrictions on the deals. This irritates travelers.

Comfort is now more important than cost

- 68% of grandparents prefer a hotel (or condo) over staying with grandkids.
- 60% prefer a condo over a hotel room.
- Amenities, comfort and ambiance are more important than money - but people still expect and will dig for a good deal.
- Lodging: location first, comfort second, then cost.
- Bigger isn't always better. Beds better be comfortable.
- FREE internet is now a must and is expected - even at B&Bs.

WHAT TO DO

- Attract timeshare, fractional ownership & condo hotel properties
- Spending is going up-market: do your retail shops pull visitors in?
- Ambiance is HUGE in creating a memorable experience that will create repeat visits.

WANT TO REACH TARGET AUDIENCES?

From CalTIA, January 2007

COLLEGE GRADS

If you're searching for the most effective way to reach this desirable group,



move your marketing dollars into online media. Nearly 80% of respondents are online purchasers.

AFFLUENT WORKING WOMEN

The big news is that this group is increasing in size, and the best way to reach them may be online. Affluent working women with family incomes of \$75,000 or more are growing in number and 94.3% access the internet during an average month.

Marketing to women should be a top priority. After all, women account for 83% of spending in the U.S. and Canada, totalling nearly \$9 trillion dollars annually. They also account for 70% of all leisure travel spending.

The Five C's of tourism are:

- **Convenience:** Easy to find information, easy to plan, easy to get to.
- **Control:** Control and flexibility with itineraries, places to stay, etc.
- **Comfort:** The top 15% of lodging facilities command 80% of the market. Comfortable beds are a big selling point.
- **Cost:** Because of the internet, pricing is transparent. Travelers expect the very best at a bargain basement price.
- **Connection:** More than ever before, travelers are looking to connect with their roots, each other, family, and the environment.

WHAT TO DO:

In all of your efforts ask yourself these questions:

1. Are we making it easy for the customer to get specific information about us? Are our marketing materials easily available online? Once the visitor arrives is it easy to find our attractions, amenities and diversionary activities?
2. Have we provided specific itineraries, but without taking away the control visitors expect? Are we providing options? Are we promoting specific types of

experiences for specific travel segments?

3. Do we have upscale accommodations, dining, and shops? People are spending at the top of the market. Do we have what they are looking for? Are our accommodations comfortable and up to date?

4. Are we promoting special deals and packages with options? Is it easy for the customer to get pricing information? Are we promoting real prices, not just percentages?

5. Are we providing experiences that will help our customers "connect" with the environment, each other, the arts, with family and friends?

The five C's of tourism revolve more around product than marketing. Destination Marketing Organizations are now realizing that they need to do more than just be a DMO - they must be involved in developing a winning product.

The most progressive DMO's in the country are working with their local jurisdictions and local organizations on the creation of business plans: Community Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plans, that will provide a road map that will lead to long-term success. After all, product sells itself. Just ask the folks in Anaheim.

The days of marketing whatever the community has to offer are over. The days of marketing lists of what are primarily diversionary activities (museums, outdoor recreation, dining, shopping, hiking, fishing, local events, etc.) are over. The days of marketing generic "unique shops" are over. This is why 97% of all community-oriented advertising is ineffective.

Welcome to THE NEW AGE OF TOURISM.





THIS IS THE AGE OF EXPERIENCES INSTEAD OF GEOGRAPHY

Travelers are looking for experiences, not cities, not counties, not regions. They are looking for activities. Forget boundaries: no one cares but you. Promote the experience first, and then the location. Make sure that what you are selling is activity-based.

In the old days, visitors would go to their favorite towns and find things that might cater to them. But today, if we want to go antique shopping, we simply go to the internet and we can find dozens of places that concentrate on antiques - and we can find them within minutes. If we are avid birders and want to photograph the Atlantic Puffin, we can find those places in just a few minutes. Visitors are looking for experiences - geography is ALWAYS second

to the activity. Look at your marketing materials, including your website. Do your efforts focus on geography or on experiences? If you are known for river rafting, if I go to a search engine and type in "river rafting, Oregon" will you show up?

If you saw a brochure titled "Discover Klickitat County, Washington" would it grab your attention? Do you really care about going to a county? Would you rather go to Napa County or Napa Valley? Which one brings an attractive picture to mind? In the case of Klickitat County, they produced new materials with the heading "The Seven Wonders of Washington's Columbia River Gorge." This promotes experiences, piques interest, and then tells the visitor where the "wonders" are located. And in the brochure it doesn't just say "home to world class river rafting." It promotes "Hell's Fury," a section of rapids that every hard-core rafter just has to experience. The rest is all generic rafting. But surviving Hell's Fury creates word-of-mouth marketing, and sets Klickitat County apart from everyone else - without ever promoting the county.

- Evoke emotion in your marketing efforts. Sell the experience.
- Instead of "historic district" (a collection of buildings), sell "historic shopping district" - the activity in a nice setting.
- If you sell river rafting, use photos of river rafters screaming in delight, not just pictures of the river.
- Create an "Activities Guide" instead of a "Visitors Guide" and start with seasons, then activities - not cities, communities, counties or geographic designations. Scenic vistas, historic downtowns are not experiences, they just reinforce the experience. They are the ambiance - what a set is to a movie. Experiences are built around activities, not things to look at.
- Make sure your experiences are different from the same activity the visitor can get closer to home. It might be one set of rapids that sets you apart as opposed to "we have great river rafting." "We're home to the famous Boulder Drop on the wild Skokomish River."





THIS IS THE AGE OF SPECIFICS INSTEAD OF GENERALITIES

YOU MUST **JETTISON THE GENERIC** in order to develop a successful tourism industry.

Read your marketing materials, and where you mention your town, county or region, insert another town, county or region. Does it still ring true if you read it using their name? If so, then your marketing is too generic. Try this:

“Discover the wide-open spaces, gracious people, and picturesque landscapes that characterize [insert your town here]. Each season holds the promise of new adventure and an incredible memory. Come join us in [your town] and

discover the scenic and recreational opportunities that await you.”

As well written as this is, it could fit just about any town, anywhere.

We have so many choices that we look for things that specifically appeal to us. Because of this, the following words and phrases should be avoided in your marketing efforts:

- Marketing counties
- Marketing cities (promote experiences, THEN the location)
- Explore
- Discover
- Outdoor recreation
- Unlike anywhere else
- Beauty & heritage
- Naturally fun
- Center of it all
- Experience
- Historic downtown
- So much to see and do
- Something for everyone
- We have it all
- Visit [name of town]
- Best kept secret

When is the last time you went somewhere because they promoted themselves as having “something for everyone?” Take a look at this list of what many communities promote as primary lures:

- Historic downtown
- Variety of lodging options
- Specialty shopping
- Galleries
- Lakes, rivers or beach nearby
- Hiking and biking
- State or national parks nearby
- Camping, outdoor recreation
- Golf
- Fine restaurants
- Theater and/or music
- Antiques
- Museums
- Trails and trail systems
- Special events
- Wineries
- Fishing & hunting
- Kayaking

Could this be any town just about anywhere? The days of “something for everyone” marketing are over. You MUST market the one primary lure that sets you apart from everyone else. And it must be activity based. Now you know why 97% of all community-oriented advertising is ineffective.

By the way, promoting yourself as the “place to relax” tells visitors you have little or nothing to do. We can relax just about anywhere.





THIS IS THE AGE OF SPECIALIZATION: THE ERA OF THE BRAND

The days of being all things to all people are over. We have entered the age of specialization, where we will go great distances to find a specific experience tailored to our individual tastes. Because of the internet, we can find the best place to learn how to fly fish in a few minutes. Or we can find the community whose primary lure revolves around quilt making. While quilt making may not cater to you, for those whose passion includes quilting, these folks will travel across the country for a quilt show, classes, and quilting retailers. Just ask the folks in Sisters, Oregon.

We have entered the age of specialization. Find your niche - your brand that

sets you apart from everyone else, that your major market can't get closer to home, develop it, foster it, make it even better, and market it like crazy. Everything else - all the other activities are "diversions."

Look at what's happened over the last 30 years in just a few products:

	1970s	1990s
Frito Lay chip varieties	10	78
Vehicle models	140	260
Vehicle styles	654	1,121
Breakfast cereals	160	340
Soft drink brands	20	87
Dental flosses	12	64
Software titles	0	250,000
Houston TV channels	5	285
Amusement parks	362	1,174
Websites	0	7,200,000
Contact lens types	1	36
Bottled water brands	16	50
Magazine titles	339	790
Women's hosiery styles	5	90

You must separate your primary lures from your diversionary activities:

- **LURE:** What sets you apart from everyone else and makes you worth a special trip. What do you have that people in your major market areas can't get closer to home?
- **DIVERSION:** Things your visitors can do closer to home, but will do while in your community. Shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one diversionary activity.
- **AMENITY:** Supporting facilities such as parking, restrooms, visitor information centers.
- **AMBIANCE:** Historic downtown, beautiful places, scenery and scenic vistas.
- **ICON:** The photo opportunity that says who you are and what you are about.

The average visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet they spend only four to six hours with the primary lure that brought them to the area. They spend 8 to



10 hours with diversionary activities. In fact, 80% of visitor spending takes place with diversionary activities - it's perfectly ok to be a "diversion" as opposed to being the "primary draw."

Tourism cannot survive without diversions. While there truly is "something for everyone" in Branson, Missouri, the primary lure are the 49 theaters that draw 7.5 million annual visitors. The average visitor will attend two shows a day (four hours), and then the next ten hours shopping, dining, hiking, biking, fishing, at water parks, theme parks, museums, etc., etc.

Would you go to Anaheim if Disneyland wasn't there? How do you think that makes Universal Studios and Knott's Berry Farm feel? They don't mind being diversions. They can ride on the coattails of Disneyland and be tremendously successful. It's ok to be a diversion - but always promote the lure.

WHAT IS A BRAND?

- A brand is always specific - a specific activity targeting a specific audience. Disneyland is a place for kids and family. Las Vegas is an adult playground.
- A brand is experiential.
- A brand is a perception - a feeling people have about you.

WHAT IS NOT A BRAND?

- Logos and slogans are not a brand. They are just messages used to reinforce the brand. Do you go to Disneyland because their slogan is "The happiest place on earth"? No. You go there for what you know about Disneyland. The slogan simply reinforces your perception.
- Fruits and vegetables are not a brand - they are part of the ambiance - the stage.
- Icons are not a brand. They are the photo opportunity that supports the brand.
- Something for everyone is not a brand. Brands are specific.
- Geography is not a brand - unless you are the home of Mt. Rushmore or perhaps Niagara Falls.

WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL BRAND?

- A brand must be obvious and pervasive throughout the community. Your

gateways, entries, wayfinding signs, pole banners, business mix, attractions, and supporting diversionary activities.

- You must be first in a category or the best to make you worth a special trip.
- Successful brands are community-wide brands: there must be continuity
- The name must be synonymous with the brand:

- Country music capital	Nashville
- Gambling/adult fun	Las Vegas
- Kids & family	Disneyland/Disneyworld
- Music theater capital	Branson
- Graceland/Elvis	Memphis
- Winery capital of the U.S.	Napa Valley
- Frozen tundra	Green Bay, Wisconsin

Here's a few more brands:

- Hershey, PA	Chocolate
- Gettysburg, PA	The Civil War
- Lancaster, PA	Amish, Pennsylvania Dutch
- Washington, DC	Government
- Hollywood, CA	Movies, stars
- Salem, MA	Witch trials of 1692

The narrower the focus, the stronger the brand. All of these places really do "have something for everyone" but would you have ever heard of Salem had it not been for the witch trials which took place there 315 years ago?

The combination of a narrow focus and experiences (activities) will result in unparalleled success. Take Stew Leonards, a grocery store in Connecticut. They narrowed their focus to farm fresh produce and dairy. They built a farmyard zoo out front. They have staff dressed as cows and chickens, and displays that cluck or moo when buttons are pushed. You get free ice cream if you spend \$100 or more. The company slogan: "Profit is the applause of happy customers." Well, according the Guinness Book of World Records, Stew Leonards has the highest per square foot retail sales of any store in the world.

Never rest on your laurels. Communities and businesses are always gunning



for the top spot. Austin, Texas used to be the live music capital of the world. Branson, Missouri now owns this brand.

The bottom line (once again):

- What sets you apart from everyone else? If you have nothing, then you need to create it.
- What do you have that your market can't find closer to home?
- What makes you worth a special trip?

Third-party endorsements are what cement your position. You build your brand through public relations. Advertising is used to maintain your position, once you "own" the brand. Remember, a brand is what people think of you, not what you say you are.

Brand feasibility is what counts

To succeed you must promote businesses and attractions that support and grow the brand. If culinary tourism is your primary lure, you must promote the dining experiences that deliver on the promise. Sorry Arby's, you're the diversion, not the lure.

This is why coming up with a successful brand is never a public process. Feasibility is what determines a successful brand, not sentiment, not memberships, not political clout, not trying to make everyone happy. This is a critical distinction that separates emotion from the fact that this is about revenues - importing cash into the community or business.

Brands must be developed on the basis of feasibility, not sentiment. Run the ideas through the feasibility test:

- Is this something the primary and secondary markets can't get (or do) closer to home? That no one else in the market is already working on?
- Will it extend our seasons? Can it be developed to a nine-month plus season?
- Is it experiential?
- If it were in a community 150 miles away, would you go there for it?
- How much money will it take to develop and "own" the brand? Where will

the money come from? And how long will it take to see a return on investment?

- Can the community buy into it over time? (Notice "can" and not "will" - you will never get everyone to agree. Not many cities could easily buy into becoming the next Las Vegas, or Sin City. While the public does not decide on the brand, they are important to developing it and telling the world.
- Will and can the private sector invest in the brand?
- How wide an audience will it attract?
- Is the brand expandable? Does it have legs? Can you attach "brand extensions" to it? For instance, you may decide to become the mountain biking capital - can you add street biking? A velodrome? BMX courses? Cyclo-cross? Then can you add cross-participation sports like rock climbing?
- Do we have those who will tirelessly champion the cause? (Every branding effort requires pioneers.)
- Can we make it obvious and pervasive throughout the community?

It takes a village to create a successful brand. But it starts with just one person, one event, one business. Branding takes time. You can't build a brand overnight.

LOCAL POLITICS IS THE KILLER OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY. Visitors spend more money on diversions than the primary draw, which is often a "loss leader." Trying to please everyone is a recipe for an ineffective branding and marketing program.

Finally, implementation of nearly every rule outlined in the book "The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism" should take place **AFTER** the brand has been developed. Your wayfinding signage, gateways, visitor information kiosks, downtowns, business mix, critical mass, marketing materials, should all reflect the brand. Build the foundation first - and a strong one at that - and that will foster a successful branding effort.





THIS IS THE AGE OF YEAR ROUND TOURISM

Shorter vacations & getaways, but more of them

- The “weekend getaway” has supplanted the traditional “vacation.” Among baby boomers, a vacation is a trip to the Caribbean or Europe. A getaway is a place typically within a 2.5 hour drive (each way) of home or a short flight.
- 71% of leisure trips by private auto are planned less than a month prior to departure. The days of planning the “summer vacation” are long gone.
- 81% of air trips, however, are booked more than a month in advance of departure.
- Extend your seasons. Baby boomers, who are now becoming empty nesters, prefer to travel during the shoulder seasons: April, May, September and October. Communities must get out of the mindset of the “peak

season” being June, July and August, or in the south December through March. The boomers prefer to travel in the “shoulder seasons” of spring and fall when there is less traffic, lower rates (but still high quality), and more time to connect.

Because of the move to shorter and more frequent escapes or getaways, travelers no longer think of seasonal travel. If they decide to travel in February, they’ll pick destinations that have nice weather that time of year. Once again, experiences take precedence over geography. These trips now take place when time is available, not when the season is right.

WHAT TO DO:

When marketing, particularly on websites, start with “Pick your season” and then “Pick your passion.” Use six seasons:

- December/January - the holiday season
- February/March - Romance, beginning of spring
- April/May - spring time
- June/July - the first half of summer
- August/September - the second half of summer
- October/November - fall color season

Then, once the visitor picks the season, they are taken to a menu where they can pick the activity that caters to them in that “season.” Also, provide activities by mode of travel: private car, tour bus, motorcycle, bike, RV.

- Create TOMA (Top Of Mind Awareness) so you are the first place that comes to mind when travelers are deciding on a last-minute getaway.
- Case in point: You want to get away for an adult getaway (with friends or with a significant other), for some wild fun, entertainment and lots of nightlife. A place where you can cut loose and explore your wild side. What’s the first place that comes to mind? Did you think Las Vegas? “What happens here, stays here.” That’s TOMA. Is Las Vegas the only place you can do this? Of course not, but a well-branded destination secures Top of Mind Awareness.





THIS IS THE AGE OF INSTANT INFORMATION- THE AGE OF CONVENIENCE

The internet has changed everything in tourism

- 68% of all households now have immediate access to the internet
- 94% of these people use the internet as their primary travel planning resource - especially when seeking out new places to visit. This applies to conferences, business trips and leisure-trip getaways.
- 68% of travelers have difficulty finding what they are looking for.
- 76% find on-line advertising a major nuisance.
- 38% will pay up to 20% more for customized products and services.
- 70% of web users never go past the first two pages of search results.

- 88% of destination marketing organizations spend more on printed materials than on the internet. They have it backwards. You must reverse that spending in order to succeed.
- The second most popular use of the internet is planning and researching travel.

WHAT TO DO

- Make your website your number one marketing priority.
- Sell experiences, not geography, not organizations. Visitors are looking for activities more than places. Use keywords to promote activities.
- Make sure your website is good enough to close the sale. How do you stack up to the competition? Don't be afraid to spend \$15,000 or more for an EFFECTIVE website. You have one chance to close the sale.
- Purchase "keyword sponsorships" on Google and Yahoo! search engines. Go to www.adwords.com (Google), and www.overture.com (Yahoo! and others) to make sure you're on that first page of search results.
- Develop a database driven e-marketing program. It will create top of mind awareness.
- Make sure your marketing materials are viewable on-line and in PDF downloadable files. Make sure they are printable on 8.5"x11" paper.
- Do NOT use gimmicks - flashing icons, music, etc.
- Use high-quality professional photography (experiences not just scenic vistas), even high quality short video clips.
- Promote specific businesses that are unique to the area.
- Viewers scan websites - use bullet points.
- Answer viewer's questions: What is there to do? Where can I stay? How do I get there? Any special activities this time of year? Any package deals?
- Keep your website simple and easy to navigate.
- The new .travel internet domain will continue to grow in popularity as suppliers seek to market their services in a more refined online environment, and as consumers seek refuge from the contamination and frustration that accompanies searches in the .com domain.





WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT - THE BOTTOM LINE

To become the destination of choice, here's the to-do list:

1. Develop a winning brand - what sets you apart from everyone else and makes you worth a special trip, a repeat visit, and extended stays. Promote the primary lure, not the diversions. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.
2. Start with a Community Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan. It takes a village to obtain success. Everyone plays a role. Make sure it's an Action Plan as opposed to a Strategic Plan. This will provide you with a "to do list" for nearly every community organization that will play a role. This plan is NOT just about tourism. It's about community. Remember, if locals don't hang out in your town, neither will visitors.

3. Concentrate on product development initiatives that support and reinforce the brand. Destination Marketing Organizations must learn to step outside the roles of marketers and push for product. Product sells itself.
2. Promote six seasons, specific experiences during each season. Start with "Pick your season," and once they do so then "Pick your passion:" the experiences available that time of year. Concentrate on your brand.
3. Develop detailed half-day, full-day, multi-day itineraries. Detailed includes promoting specific locations, amount of time the visitor should plan spending at attractions and doing diversionary activities. These must include detailed specifics, not just generalities.
4. Promote specific businesses - your anchor tenants that support and reinforce your brand.
5. Promote experiences, not geography. Purchase key words (pay per click) promoting experiences, particularly those that strengthen your brand.
6. Extend your seasons. Do not use the words "peak season" or "shoulder season" or "off season." If you are a traditional seasonal destination, stretch your seasons by one week at both ends, then in two years add another week before and after the "peak" season, gradually extending your season.
7. Know your audience. Find your niche. Who is it you hope to attract? Get to know this audience and how to reach them.
8. Don't try to be all things to all people. Avoid the generic marketing that is no longer effective. Promote the primary lure, the attraction you are most known for, and then your location, and then the diversionary activities.
9. Make the internet your primary marketing tool. All of your ads and public relations efforts should direct potential visitors to your website. This means your site MUST be good enough to close the sale. Invest in it.
10. Shopping and dining is the number one diversionary activity. Make sure your downtown has the critical mass and is an outstanding destination.





Critical mass is not just a religious experience

The rule of convenience

- The #1 visitor activity in the world is shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting.
- Critical mass is critical to success: visitor-oriented retail should be in a compact setting.
- Separate your “neighborhood retail” from “destination retail.” You may need to rearrange your business mix to create the right balance of critical mass.
- The equation is 10+10+10. Ten destination retail shops, ten dining & treats, and ten businesses open after 6:00. All of this within a two to three lineal block area. This is the MINIMUM critical mass. The more you have to offer, the further people will come and the longer they will stay.
- Concentrate your business mix on your brand. Carmel, California - world renowned for its galleries - has 120 of them downtown.
- Ever wonder why fast food restaurants and gas stations gather together at intersections? The critical mass (choice) translates to increased sales for all. Another example: Antique malls.



Bragging is better when someone else does it for you

The rule of public relations

- Publicity is MUCH more valuable than advertising – but you do need both.
- Implement a professional PR campaign: it will build brand, improve your image.
- You build your brand through public relations, advertising is used to maintain your position.
- Cater to niche groups - clubs and organizations. They are looking for activities that cater to their members. Nearly all have newsletters or magazines with tremendous editorial opportunity.
- You should see \$3 in “earned media” - what it would cost if you had to pay for the space, for every \$1 spent on a professional PR program.
- Articles are read three times more than ads and have more credibility. After all, in ads you’re tooting your own horn where in articles a third party is tooting your horn for you.
- Develop an online press kit. Paper press kits are a thing of the past.





Happiness is positive cash flow

The rule of marketing versus product development

- Effective marketing can bring visitors to your community, helping your local businesses thrive, BUT...
- Product development is critical to making any community a destination and is the key ingredient in any branding effort.
- Invest in activities and attractions: things to see and do. The more you have to offer, the further people will travel to visit you and the longer they will stay.
- Invest in infrastructure - upgrade, enhance, add signage and visitor amenities.
- Don't market before you can deliver.
- Most communities promote whatever they have, even though their primary market can do the same thing closer to home. They create lists, as opposed to experiences. Tourism development should be a primary focus and emphasis, even if you have a solid brand and a strong customer base. You can never rest on your laurels. Always make sure you're investing in your product - your brand. As the product develops, then tip the scales more towards marketing.



Create gathering places

The rule of "hanging out"

- If locals don't "hang out" in your downtown, neither will visitors. A top priority should be the creation of gathering places. Plazas instead of - or in addition to - parks.
- Widen the sidewalks, narrow the streets. People are drawn to intimate settings. Let merchants offer outside dining.
- Create water features, landscaped buffers between vehicle and pedestrian corridors. Develop small amphitheaters, which serve for events and give people seating places for picnics, lunches and even morning coffee.
- Provide a permanent home for open air markets, a growing draw to downtowns.
- Develop public art that promotes the brand.
- Creating plaza areas will help bring in outside events to the community. Car shows, art shows, hobby organization events, etc.

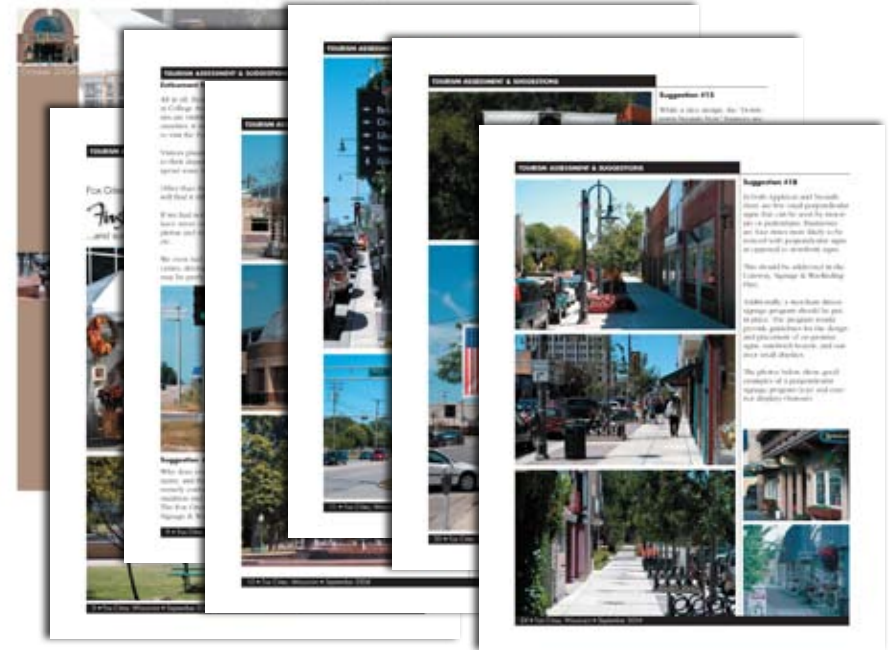




Success Begins With A Good Architect

The rule of planning

- Create a Community/Downtown Development, Branding & Marketing Plan - an action plan with detailed recommendations. Who should do it, when it should be done, how much it will cost to implement, where the money would come from, and the rationale for the recommendation.
- The plan should include: Product development, upgrades and improvements, repositioning and branding, attractions and events, wayfinding, signage and gateways, visitor amenities and services, critical mass, beautification, marketing and public relations, public/private partnerships, recruitment, funding and budgets, organizational development.
- An Action Plan provides a to-do list for multiple organizations, where a Strategic Plan provides general strategies, goals, and objectives. Every community needs an Action Plan ready for implementation.
- It includes branding (what do we want to be known for?), development (what do we need to build to own the brand), and marketing (how do we tell the world and cement our position?).

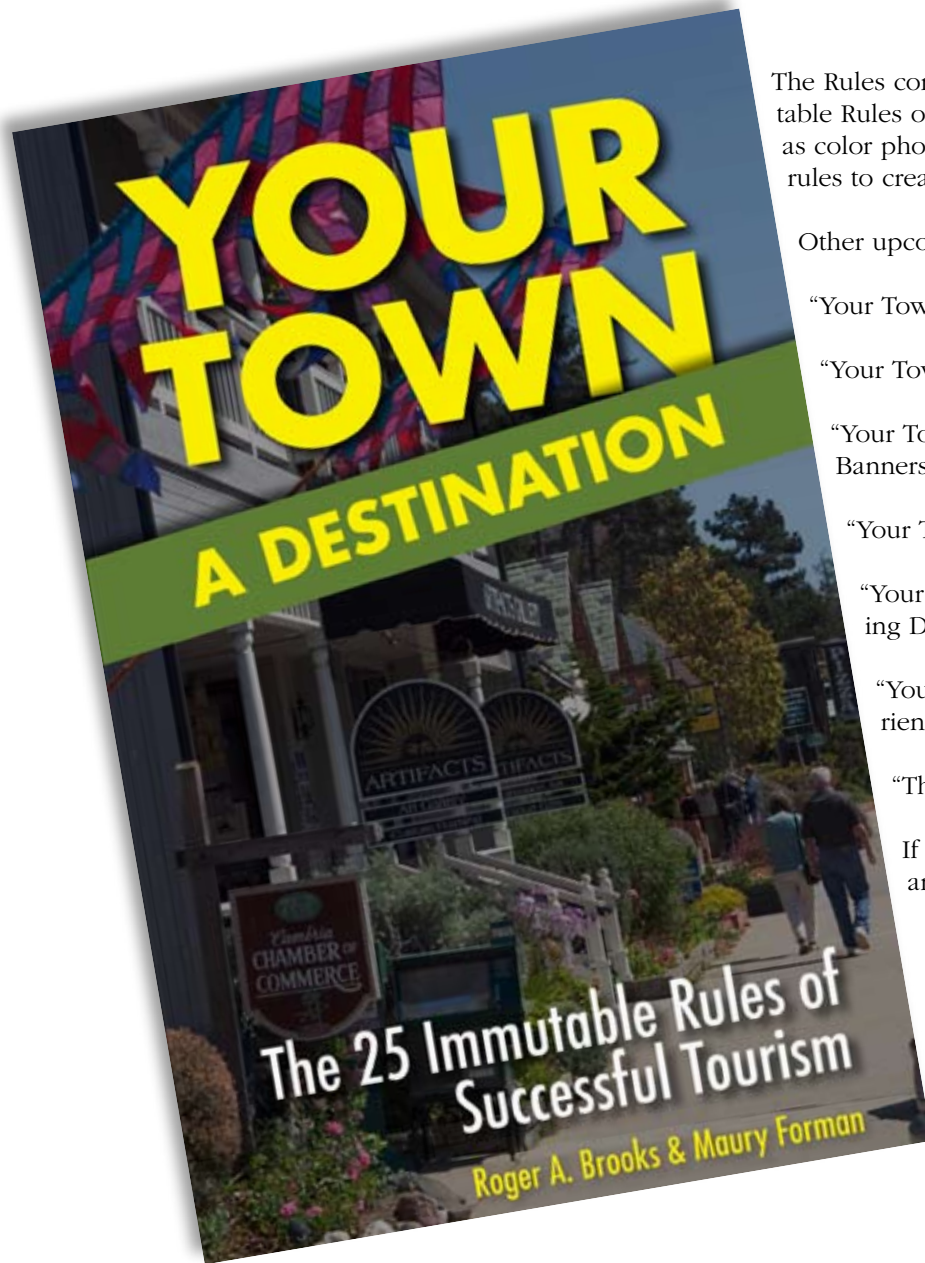


Start with an assessment. This is a look at the community through the eyes of a visitor. It's a look using all the rules outlined in the book *The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism*. The assessment process looks at your branding efforts, marketing, signage and wayfinding, retail mix, things to see and do, lures and diversions, product development, infrastructure, etc.

For every shortcoming, suggestions are offered to provide ways and ideas for taking the steps to a more vibrant downtown and/or tourism industry. The assessment process often allows someone from the outside to say the things that need to be said, but aren't often addressed because of the political fallout.

The assessment is meant to be a conversation starter. It's the first part of the overall plan - where you are today. The plan goes on to determine where you want to go and how to get there.





The Rules contained in this handout are from the book “Your Town: A Destination - The 25 Immutable Rules of Successful Tourism.” The book includes information not included in the handout such as color photographs and case histories and, of course, additional “immutable” (or never changing) rules to creating outstanding destinations.

Other upcoming books include:

“Your Town: Online - From Ho Hum to Hooked. How to Create a Captivating Website”

“Your Town: Branded - From Any One to the Only One. How to be First, Best or Truly Unique”

“Your Town: Signed - From Chaos to Choreographed. The Rules of Billboards, Wayfinding, Banners and Gateways”

“Your Town: Downtown - From Boring to Bustling. The Rules to Reinventing Downtown”

“Your Town: Marketed - From Unknown to Unforgettable. Making the Most of Your Marketing Dollar”

“Your Town: Experienced - From Asleep to Alive. The Rules to Creating Outstanding Experiences”

“The Tourism Development Handbook”

If you'd like to be included on the mailing list as these titles are published, please send an e-mail request to TheTeam@DestinationDevelopment.com.





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